Chapter 39 | A Cavity? And Homemade Mapo Tofu

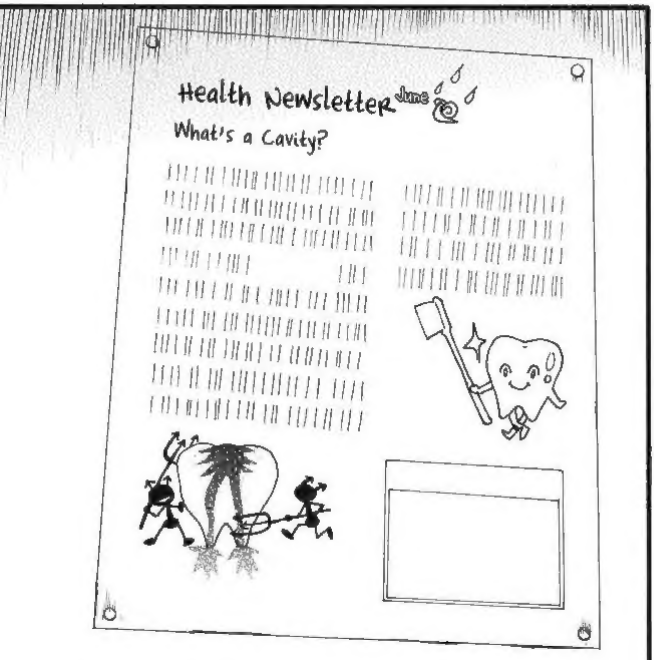
...
?
...so brush your teeth really thoroughly!
The dentist is coming to school soon...
RIP
Oh!
And Tsumugi gets her teeth checked.
Hmm...
Next week we put out bulk trash for pick-up...
It's fine! They're nice and clean!
Want me to check how you're doing? It's been a while.

Hey, let's go play dodge-ball!
Thank you for the food!
Bah ha-ha!

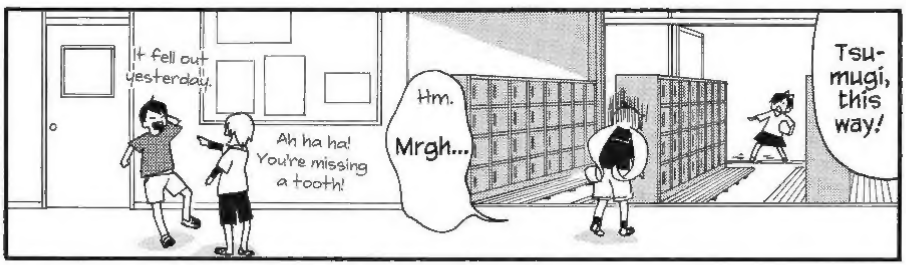
DIING
DOOOOONG
DIING
...

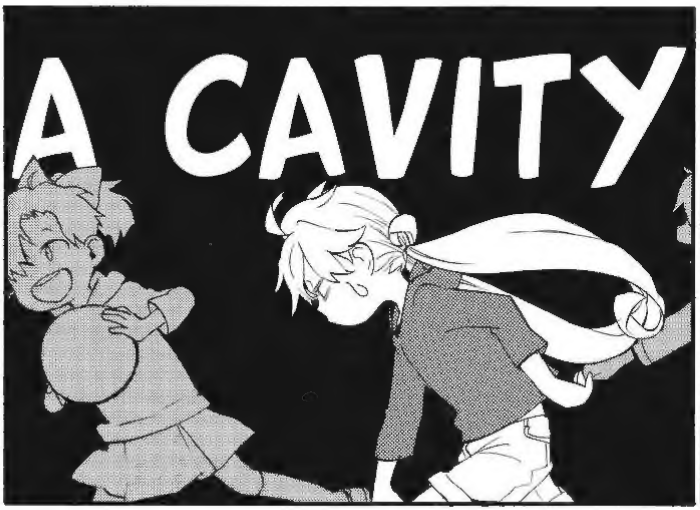
You not hungry today?
That doesn't happen often.
Tsumugi, are you still eating?

We'll go play while you finish.
OH, HUH.
I'm just chewing everything carefully with my back teeth.
'Kay.


Health Newsletter June
What's a Cavity?

...bacteria get into the bone...


It fell out yesterday.
Ah ha ha! You're missing a tooth!
Hm.
Mrgh...
Tsu-mugi, this way!


A CAVITY

Maybe it's...
Mine did that last year.

CHEW
CHEW
CHEW
CHEW
Tsumugi, Yagi gave us a cheese-cake. Want some?
No thanks, I'm not hungry.
I see...
We'll have it tomor-row then.
Tsumugi, if something's bothering you, let's talk about it, okay?

NO PROB-LEMS AT ALL.
...Re-ally?
Nah, some-thing's definite-ly up.
She was so happy at the field day.
Thank you for the meal!
There were other families there besides us without both parents...
But it's a lot bigger than the pre-school, and there were a lot of different people.
Maybe somebody said something when I wasn't around...
...or maybe something happened to hurt her.

Uh oh.
The tooth.
It's loose...
If the bacteria gets into the bone...
...the tooth will decay and fall out...
Tsu-mugi?
Good-night.
...
I should've brushed harder.
I don't want Daddy to find out.

What can I do for her?
He's gonna get super-duper mad!
GLOOM

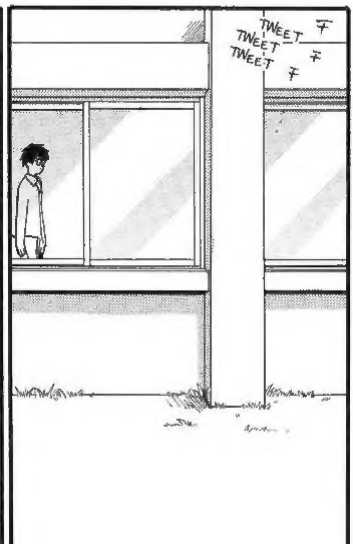
There's more things they can't tell their dad, huh?
As girls get older...
HMM?
Y-you think so?

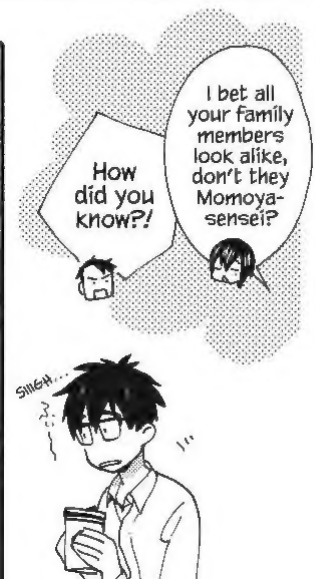
Sensei... you not feeling well?
No, that's not it...

I think it's important to be really honest with other people about what you're thinking.
In my family, we're all really open with each other!

Huh?
You didn't?
I didn't really go to my mother for advice or anything, either.
Yeah...

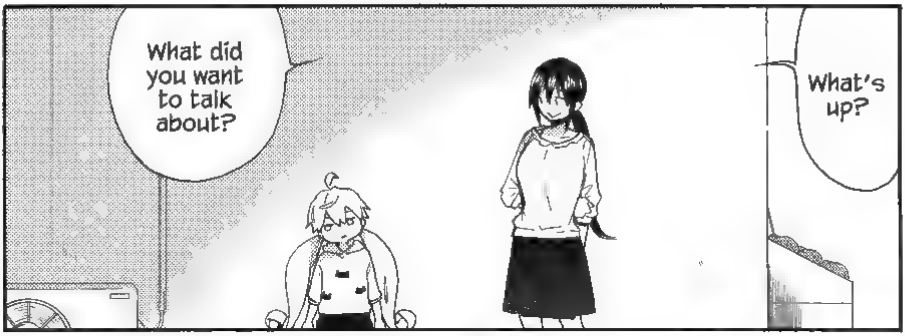
...

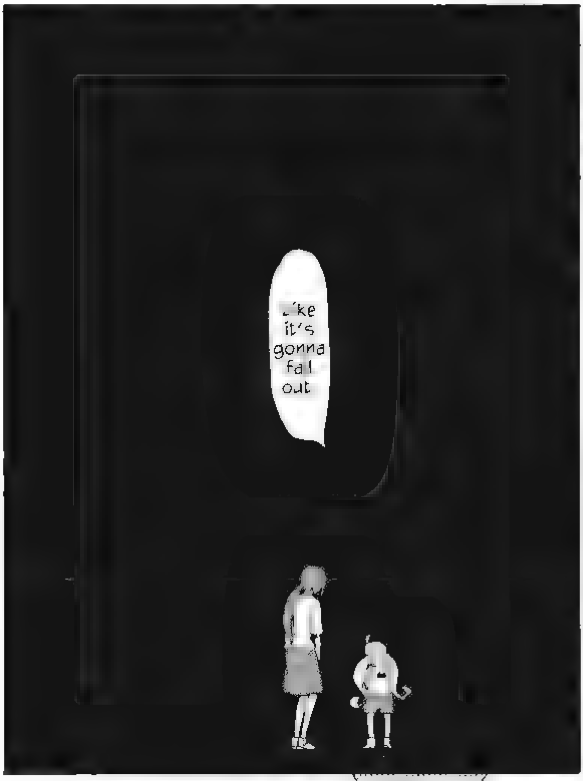

TWEET
TWEET
TWEET


How did you know?!
I bet all your family members look alike, don't they Momoya-sensei?
SIIGH...

GRIP
Day Off
HEE HEE!
GRIN
Tsumugi, what do you want to eat today?
S-Something soft?
No! I like soft things!
You're not hungry?
HMM... Maybe a gooey soup?
I could add in some veggies to make it more nutritious.
Oh!

Hello, you two.
Hey, there!
Wel-come!
You guys shopping?
Sign: Kojika Greengrocers
Huh?
Daddy, go shopping for a second.
I'll wait here with Kotori-chan.
?
STARE
Hey, welcome! Leafy greens are expensive right now. We've got a special on green onions.
SHOCK
Again...
Forget about Daddy!
I don't mind, but Sensei...


What did you want to talk about?
What's up?


...ke it's gonna fall out

My tooth...
...feels...

I didn't brush my teeth right, so it might be a cavity... It wiggles... If it falls out... then...
SOB
SOB
It doesn't hurt at all, but...
SOB
Huh?!
Does it hurt?
YOU OKAY?!

Tsu-mugi-chan...
You sure you're not just grow-ing new teeth?
Daddy'll get mad, right?
When kids get to be about your age...
...their baby teeth fall out and grown-up teeth come in.
Did any of your friends have their teeth fall out?
They did!

New teeth!

...new teeth!
It's...

He would! 'Cause I screwed up!
Would he really get mad?
I'M SAFE!
I thought Daddy would be mad at me!

WHAT A RELIEF!

AWWW..
SOB
She's such a good girl...
I don't want him to maybe not like me, so I can't tell him.

There are sometimes things you can't tell someone because you really like them.
Uh huh!
Hee hee hee...
If there's anything else you need to talk about, come to me, okay?
Sure!
You know...
... I kinda want to ask you more stuff...
If only you were my big sister!
AWWW
L-Little kid power is incredible...
Do they really say stuff like this?
STAGGER
Tsumugi!
You done talking?

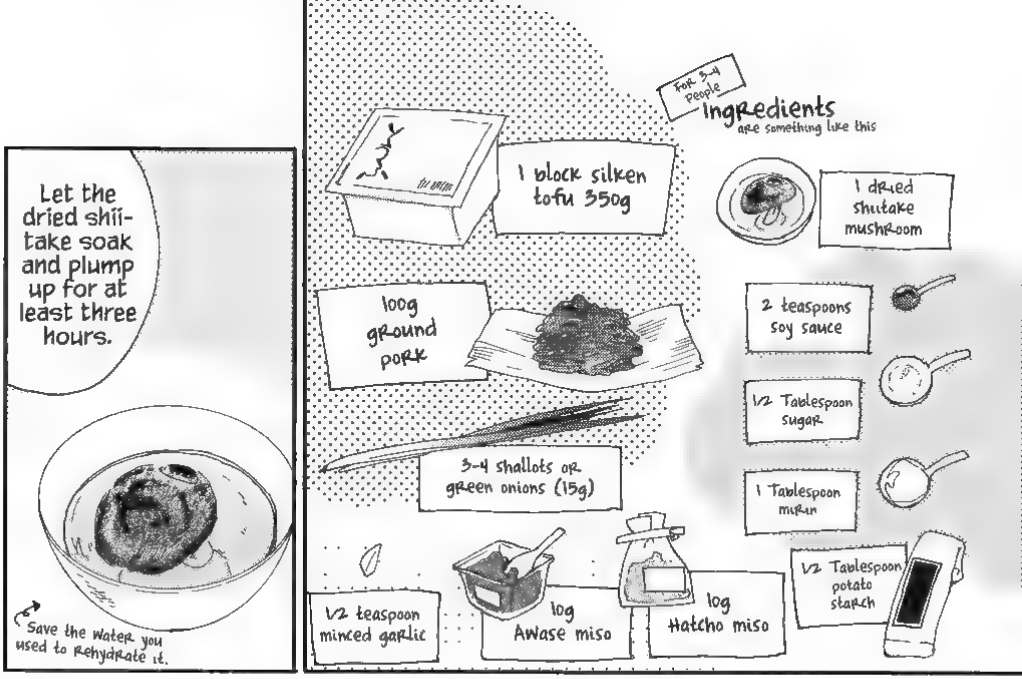
Tsu-mugi!
DASH
Daddy!
?!
すぽん
POP
WHUMP
HA HA HA!
TSUMUGI?!
Oh.
It fell out.

Smile!
AH HA HA!
Let's send it to Grandma and Grandpa!
Daddy, look! Look!
KA-TCHIK!
SPLURT
WAH HA HA HA!
No... That's bad manners!
'Kay!
Naughty

SIIIGH...
Still, I can't believe you thought it was a cavity...
And you went to Kotori-san for help first, too...
Does it sting?
It's fine.
You're okay?
I said, it's fine!
It's just kinda weird having a hole there.
Come on!
Pinky promise!
Fine.
If you lie...
It's a pinky promise...
It doesn't have to be your teeth, but next time you think something's weird, you absolutely have to tell Daddy!
Uewweh...ihh...
The one thing you can never do is hide when your body isn't feeling right, okay?
You don't have to swallow a thousand needles, but I'll get mad at you in the scariest way I can.
WHAT?!

Today we're making mapo tofu.*
Mapo!
...to find out what would be easy for you to eat.
I talked to Kotori-san and Shinobu-san...
We usually make chawan-mushi...
What is it?!
...or nyumen, which is good too.

*Mapo Tofu: Tofu in a spicy chili bean sauce.


For 3-4 people
Ingredients are something like this
1 block silken tofu 350g
1 dried shiitake mushroom
100g ground pork
2 teaspoons soy sauce
1/2 Tablespoon sugar
3-4 shallots or green onions (15g)
1 Tablespoon mirin
1/2 Tablespoon potato starch
1/2 teaspoon minced garlic
10g Awase miso
10g Hatcho miso
Let the dried shiitake soak and plump up for at least three hours.
Save the water you used to rehydrate it.

About this size?
Then mince the garlic.
CHOP CHOP CHOP
Cut the onions to the length you want them...
You can chop right through it
Then...
...cube the tofu.
It's squishy!
Shiitake bowl

Then add in the tofu and boil on medium heat.
Put a liter of water and a half tablespoon of salt into a pot and stir thoroughly.
TOSS
PLUNK
It'll get firm and less likely to fall apart.
Mix together the hatcho miso...
...the awase miso, the soy sauce, the sugar, and the mirin...
SNIFF SNIFF
The smell of the shiitake...
No playing with the shiitake!
Okay!

Can I help? Can I help?
Hmm...
There's not that much to do this time.
Can you dish out the rice later?
It's hot though.
Okay!
Then...
SPLASH
Once it has boiled, put the tofu in a strainer and rinse with cold water.
Slowly saute the ground pork.
SIZZLE
Don't move it.
Once it browns...
...break it apart and add the garlic.
SIZZLE
SIZZLE
When it is fragrant...
...add in the seasonings and the shiitake and mix...
On it's all mixed together and the fat is rendering, add in the water you used to plump the shiitake mushroom.
Thanks
Here!
BUBBLE
BUBBLE
Then add the tofu.
SIZZLE
Add in the onions ...
...then mix the potato starch with water and blend that in too.
Oho!

I guess I'll make real mapo tofu with douban-jiang.
First I'll cut the ingredients...
I think Sensei's capable of making it now...
...but will he be okay?
I'm hungry!
Almost done!
Hey, Kotori...
...if the reason you were avoiding knives...
...wasn't just because you were scared after you got hurt...
...but if it was also our fault...

There's still a little scar...
...but I decided I wouldn't let it bother me.
And then it really did stop bothering me.
Mom, I'm okay now.
My friends helped, and...
I wasn't alone.
I made you get better on your own, huh?
I see...
...dealing with a little kid makes you act more grown up?
Maybe...
Cough Cough
They helped too...
So did the Inuzuka family?

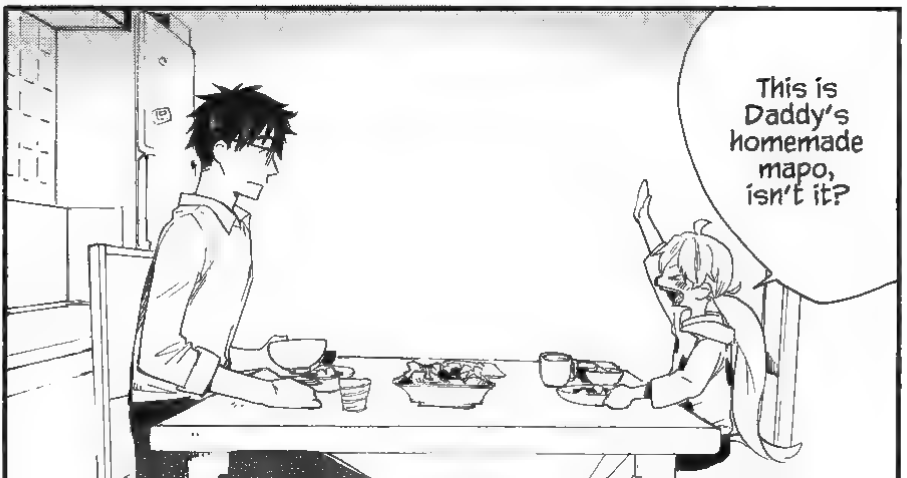
You and Dad support me now.
That's plenty.
Wow, you've really grown up, huh?
I'm in my last year of high school, you know?
SHMP
Daddy, is this enough?
Oh!
That's a lot, huh?
It's hot, so be careful!
Ooh!

All done!
Let's eat!
I guess that means I've grown, huh?
Heh heh!
Maybe 'cause I could apply what I learned.
There were a lot of small steps, but it was pretty simple.
It looks yummy!
PUFF
PUFF

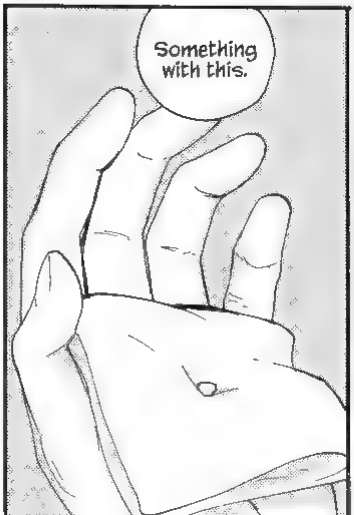
CHOMP
ぱくっ
MMMM!
You're a grown up!
I'm going to add some chili oil to make it hotter.
The meat's juicy!
The tofu's melty!
It's good!
It's good even without the spice, though!
Spicy!
Really?

Hmm...
I like it this way!
The meat's the one from Mom's homemade curry.
Is it?
The real stuff's spicy, you know?
This version's for kids.

This is homemade mapo!
GASP!

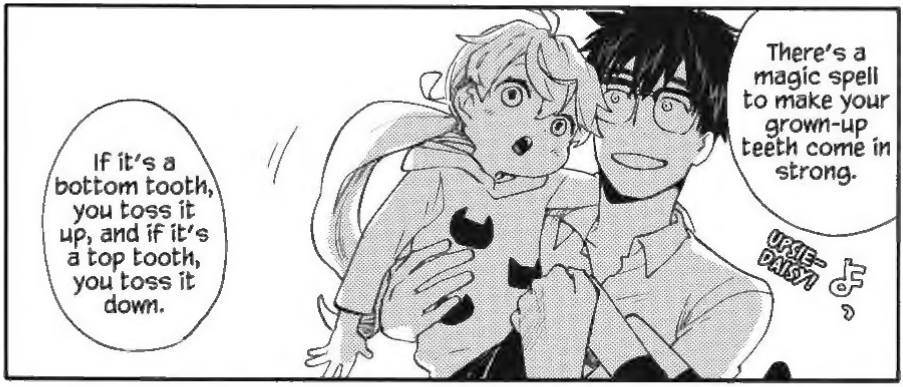

This is Daddy's homemade mapo, isn't it?

That's nice!
Right?
Daddy's mapo, huh?


Something with this.

What are we doing?
What? What?
I'm glad it's clear out today.

I'm stuffed...


There's a magic spell to make your grown-up teeth come in strong.
If it's a bottom tooth, you toss it up, and if it's a top tooth, you toss it down.
UP-SIE-DAISY!

That's how high I want you to throw it.
Up, huh? So it reaches the sky?

So your teeth grow in strong?
Yup. This was a bottom tooth, so let's toss it up, okay?

Mmm...

Yup, yup.
The big one.

That one?
Instead of throwing it straight up, maybe you should throw it towards that star.

I wonder if it reached the star!
I bet it did.

It's kind of sad...
...but when kids grow up, they start relying on people who aren't their parents, huh?
HA HA HA...
Well...
I'm glad the reason was a cute one.

It's a good thing to have lots of people you can count on.
Yeah...
You've started talking to us more, for one thing.
HUH?
Have I really?
You have!
I'm sorry, I guess...
This guy...
Okay... Now open wide.
Oh?
Your grown-up teeth are coming in, aren't they!
I know!

To be continued...